A

SERMON

Preached in the Cathedral and *Metropolitical Church* of St. *Peter* in YORK.

Septemb. VII. 1704.

Being the Day of

THANKSGIVING

For the late Glorious Victory Obtained over the *French* and *Bavarians* at *Bleinheim* near *Hochſtet* the Second of *Auguſt* by the Forces of Her Majeſty and Her Allies, under the Command of the Duke of *Marlborough*.

By *WILLIAM PEARSON*, Arch-Deacon of *Nottingham*, and Canon Reſidentiary of the Church of *YORK*.

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TO

The Right Honourable *ELIAS PAWSON* Esq.

Lord Major, and the Worshipful the *Recorder*, *City-Council*, and Court of *Aldermen* of the City of *YORK*.

Right Honourable and Worshipful,

AS *I was far from entertaining any Thoughts of Printing this* Sermon *while I was composeing it, so I am now so conscious to my self of it's many* Imperfections, *and of it's falling much below the Dignity and Excellency of it's* Subject, *that I cannot but Wish I might have been excused from publishing it.* However, *the kind* Reception *you were pleased to give it when it was* Preached, *and the Desire you expressed to have it made* Public, *have Overruled my own private* Sentiments *and* Inclinations *as to that Point: there being in Truth no* Imputation *or* Censure *that I so much dread the Thoughts of rendering my self Obnoxious to, as that of being awanting in any* Respects *due from me to* Persons *in that* Honourable Station *which the Providence of God hath placed you in.*

If

If what I here, in Compliance with your Desires, *present the* Public *with, shall any way contribute to the preserving in Men's Minds a Grateful Remembrance of God's late* Signal Mercies *to us, and to the Procuring the Continuance of his Loving-Kindness towards this* Nation *for the future, by enforcing the* Obligation *that our Holy Religion lays upon us to lead Virtuous and Godly Lives, in Order to the gaining an* Interest *in his* Favour: *to his Blessed and Holy Name be the* Praise; *who, by the weakest and most disproportionate* Means, *can when he pleases, bring about the Greatest Ends and Designs of his* Providence.

That God Almighty *may always have you under His Gracius* Protection, *and Bless this* Ancient City *committed to your Care with plentiful* Increase *of all Spiritual and Temporal* Blessings, *shall ever be the hearty Prayer of.*

Right Honourable and Worshipful,

Your most Obedient

and Humble Servant

W: PEARSON.

A SERMON

Preach'd in the Cathedral Church

of YORK, &c.

II. Chron. xxxii. 7. 8.

Be ſtrong and couragious, be not afraid nor diſmay'd for the King of Aſſyria, *nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him.*

With him is an Arm of Fleſh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our Battels.

THeſe words are that ſhort, but very comprehenſive ſpeech which the good King *Hezekiah* made to his Army and People, to encourage them to ſtand

up in defence of themſelves, their Prince, and Country againſt the King of *Aſſyria*: who, at that time, had actually invaded *Judea*, laid Siege to and taken ſeveral of their Fenced Cities, and was preparing to inveſt *Jeruſalem* it ſelf.

Now, if the Jews had judged of the Succeſs of this Enterprize merely from the outward State and Circumſtances that they were then in, excluſive of the divine Favour and Aſſiſtance, comparing their own with the ſtrength, and Power, and Numbers of the Enemies they had to encounter with; the great and apparent Inequality and Diſproportion between them in all theſe reſpects, could not but have given them very diſmal Apprehenſions of the Iſſue of thoſe Dangers that they ſaw hanging over their Heads.

They had but two much Experience of the Power and Strength of the King of *Aſſyria*: They knew his Dominions were of vaſt Extent, His Provinces Rich, His Armies numerous, well vers'd in all the Arts of War, fluſh'd with a long ſeries of Victories, and under the Conduct of Wiſe and Experienced Generals, Ambitious upon all Occaſions to advance the Glory of their *Prince*, and enlarge the Bounds of his Empire.

They had in their View the Conqueſts which this People had lately made in the Neighbouring Countries of *Samaria* and *Paleſtine*: They had ſeen *Aſhdod* and other Cities of the *Philiſtines*

tines taken by *Sargon*, and their Brethren the ten Tribes of *Iſrael* carryed into Captivity by *Salmanaſer*, two of *Sennacheribs* Predeceſſors. And as for *Sennacherib* himſelf, that *Grand King*, as his Flatterers ſtyled him, whom they had now to deal with; *Hezekiah* had found, that, as his Power and Ambition were great, ſo they were made the Rule and Meaſure of his Actions; neither the Faith of Publick *Treaties* nor the Obligation of *Oaths* laying any farther Tye upon him than as he found them ſubſervient to his Covetous and Ambitious Deſigns. He had received *Hezekiah's* Ambaſſadors, accepted the Overtures of Peace which they made him, and (as *Joſephus* tells us) ſent them away with all the Aſſurance that the ſolemn Oath of a *King* could give them, that he would forthwith depart out of their Country: and yet, no ſooner was this done, but his Army is ſent to inveſt and deſtroy *Jeruſalem*.

Isa. 36. 4.

Liv. 10. *C.* 1.

Now, what a diſcourageing *Proſpect* muſt this State of Affairs give the *Jews*, when threatned and inſulted by ſuch a powerful and implacable Enemie; too much ſuperior to them in all the outward Advantages of War, to be opposed by *Force*, and too reſolutely bent upon their Deſtruction to be ſoftned into any ſafe, laſting and honourable Peace? Had they lookt no farther than this outward Face of things, they muſt, doubtleſs, have ſunk under the Apprehenſion of

those seemingly insuperable *Dangers* that threatned them.

But *unto the Upright there ariseth Light in the Darkness*; they have a safe Anchor for their Hopes to rest at, even when, to all outward appearance, their Condition seems desperate. *Hezekiah speaks comfortably to his People*: He shows them the bright *Reverse* of that dark Cloud that hung over them: Assuring them, that tho', consider'd barely in themselves, they might be as Weake, and Defenceless, and Insignificant as they were in the *Opinion* of their Insolent and Insulting Enemies; yet, for all that, they needed not to be dismayed: the *Lord of Hosts* was with them, and would fight for them; His Almighty Arm would discomfit their Enemies, and bring Deliverance to his People. And upon an entire Trust and Confidence of this (in which the Event shewed he was not mistaken) he grounds his Exhortation here in the Words of my Text: *Be strong and Couragious, be not afraid nor dismayed for the King of* Assyria, *nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him. With him is an Arm of Flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our Battels.*

In discoursing upon which Words, I shall consider,

1. The

1. The *Argument* that *Hezekiah* makes uſe of to encourage his People to hope for *Victory* over their Enemies.

2. The *Corollaries* that are naturally deducible from it, ſuitable to the Occaſion of this Day's *Solemnity.*

1. The *Argument* he uſes to encourage his People upon this Occaſion, is this: That they needed not to fear or be diſmayed upon the Account of the *Strength*, or *Numbers* of their Enemies, becauſe *the Lord their God* was with them, would help them, and fight their Battels for them; which would abundantly overballance all the outward Advantages that their Enemies could have over them in either of thoſe Reſpects. No *Force* could withſtand his *Omnipotence*; No *Multitude* could equal the *Number* of that Heavenly Hoſt of Miniſtring Spirits that are ever attending upon the *Great King* of the World, ready to receive his *Commands* and execute the Deſigns of his *Providence.*

But, for the better underſtanding the *Nature* and *Force* of this Argument, it will be proper to reſolve it into it's Principles, and to conſider,

1. The Truth of that *General Principle*, which is here ſuppoſed and taken for granted, and

and upon which the *Argument* is Grounded, *viz.* That every Good and Righteous Nation or People is the peculiar Care of God's Providence, and needs not doubt of his Protection.

2. The Grounds of the *Subsumption*, or the Reasons upon which *Hezekiah* applyes this General Principle to Himself and his People, or supposes them to be such a Nation or People; and consequently, qualified for, and entitled to the peculiar Care, Favour and Protection of Almighty God. and,

3. The Premises being Considered, we shall then plainly see the *Force* of the *Conclusion* which is drawn from them: that therefore they needed not to be *afraid or dismayed for the King of* Assyria, *nor for all the multitude that was with him.*

1. The *General Principle* that the whole *Argument* is grounded and turns upon is this: That every Good and Righteous Nation or People is the *Peculiar Care* of God's Providence, and entitled to his Protection: the Truth whereof will appear from the following Considerations.

God Almighty, as he made the World at first by His Power, so He still prefides over, disposes and

and Orders all things in it by His *Providence*; and that, as realy and as truly, as any *Temporal Princes* do the Affairs of their Kingdoms, or any *Maſters* the Concerns of their own Private Families. This is one of the *Firſt Principles* of all, both Natural and Revealed, Religion; neceſſarily included in, and inſeperably interwoven with, the very Notion of a God: and, conſequently, what, I hope, I need not long inſiſt upon the Proof of in this Auditory.

Your frequenting Gods *Houſe*; Your Attending upon his Holy *Ordinances*; Your putting up your *Prayers* and *Supplications* for what you ſtand in need of, and giving *Thanks* for the Mercies and Deliverances you at any time receive: theſe Things, I ſay, if they are done upon *Principles*, and out of a ſence of *Duty*, do plainly imply and are founded upon your *Belief* of this great and Fundamental *Article* of Faith.

For, were you not fully perſwaded that there is an Inviſible *Being* that Govern's the World, Diſpoſing and Manageing all things in it by the hidden Springs of an infinitly Wiſe and Good *Providence*, Diſpenſing Good and Evil to Mankind accordingly as they Behave or Demean themſelves towards Him, you would not think your ſelves concern'd in the Buſineſs of *Religion*, or under any neceſſity of Worſhipping God, or Regulating

Regulating your Lives and Actions by the *Rules* of his Laws, in Order to the Obtaining his *Favour* and *Protection*, or avoiding his *Displeasure*; but would quickly throw off all those Restraints that *Religion* lays upon you, extinguish all sense of Moral Good and Evil, and follow the impulse and Direction of your inordinate *Lusts* and irregular *Passions*, having nothing to expect or fear from Gods Hand, being *without Hope, and without God in the World.*

But God has imprinted this Notion of His *Providence* so deep, and in such plain and legible *Characters* in the Nature of Man, that, however some Profligate Wretches may endeavour to deface the Impressions that they find of it in their own Minds, as perceiving it to be inconsistent with, and a continual Check upon those Brutal Pleasures and ungodly Courses that they have enslaved themselves to and are resolved to pursue; Yet, they must first, not only reject the *Authority* and *Testimony* of God in His Holy Word, but also suppress and stifle the Suggestions of their own *Natural Reason* before they can possibly rid themselves of it.

For, does not even the Light of *Natural Reason* teach us to Believe, that the same *Infinite Goodness* that first moved God to make the World, will still engage Him to look after, provide for,

and

and take care of it? Especially, when it is as impossible that it should subsist one Moment without the Support and Assistance of his *Providence*, as it is for the Wheels of a *Watch* to move when the *Spring* that kept them in motion is taken away.

That Natural Care and tender Regard for their own *Offspring* which God has implanted in all Living Creatures, especially while they are incapable of preserving or taking Care of themseles, is but a faint and imperfect *Transcript* of that Fatherly Affection and tender Compassion that he himself bears towards all his Creatures. He neither wants *Wisdom* to know, nor *Power* to supply them with, what they stand in need of: And those *Attributes* in a Being infinitely and immutably Good cannot be unactive, but must exert themselves in Acts of Beneficence towards all that depend upon him, and will not leave them wholly unregarded, exposed to all the *Evil* that their frail Natures are liable to. On the contrary, he hath Assured us in his Holy Word that there are none of his Creatures so mean and inconsiderable as not to be taken Care of by Him. For does not our *Blessed Saviour* there tell us, that God *Feedeth the very Fowles of the Aire*; that though *five Sparrows are sold for two Farthings*, yet *not one of them is forgotten before God*; nor *shall fall to the Ground without*. Math. 6. 26. Luke 12. 6.

Mat. 10. 29. 30. *out the Will of our Father* ; And, as for Man, that *the very Haires of our Head are all Numbred* ? To shew in how particular a manner the good Providence of God watcheth over every one of us.

And if so, if Men in their private *Capacities* are the Objects of God's *Care*, we may well conclude that publick *Societies*, *States*, and *Kingdomes* are so in a more eminent Manner ; in as much as the Fortunes of all the Individuals that make up such Aggregate Bodies are included in them, and are bettered or impaired in Proportion to the Good or Evil that befalls them.

Accordingly the *Spirit* of Truth assures us Dan. 4. 17. *that the most High Ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will* ; That *He is the Great King over all the Earth*, and a *Governour among the Nations* ; That all Events, whether Good or Bad are to be ascribed to him as the Results of his Providence ; *If any Evil happens in a City, it is the Lord that doth it* ; *He* Amos. 3. 6. Isa. 45. 7. *maketh Peace, and Createth Evil*, is the Author of all the Public Blessings or Calamities that at any time befall a Nation.

And now, if God Governs the World, and disposes and Orders all the Affairs of it, we may be well assured He Administers that *Govern-*

ment according to the ſtrict Rules and meaſures of an unerring and immutable Juſtice, and not by any unſteddy *Impulſes* of an Arbitrary Will or Humour, without Regard to the Merits or Demerits of his Subjects, as Earthly *Governours* are apt to do.

Far be it from us to think that, with Him, *the Righteous ſhall be as the Wicked*, or that *the Judge of all the Earth ſhall not do Right*. Shall we impute to God what we eſteem a Fault and Imperfection in our ſelves? *Shall mortal Man be more Juſt than God? Shall Man be more Pure than his Maker?* No, all His Ways are *Equal* and *Juſt* and *True*, Whatever Ours be: He *is Holy in all his Ways, and Righteous in all his Works; Exerciſeing Judgement and Righteouſneſs in the Earth; For in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.* *Job.* 4. 17. *Jerem.* 9. 24.

And, indeed, the whole Hiſtory of God's own People the *Jews*, as 'tis Recorded in the Old and New Teſtament, is but one uniform Comment upon, or Exemplifidcation of, this great Truth, that God protects or puniſhes a *Nation* or *People* accordingly as they behave themſelves well or ill towards Him. For, as *Achior* told *Holofernes*, *When they Sinned not before God they proſpered, becauſe the God that hateth Iniquity was with them; but when they departed from the Way that He* *Judeth* 5. 17 18.

He Appointed them, they were deſtroyed in many Batttels very ſore, and were led Captive into a Land that was not theirs, and the Temple of their God was caſt to the Ground, and their Cities were taken by their Enemies.

And this Method of *God's* dealing with them was ſo notorious, that, when ever they were thought guilty of any remarkable and Open Violation of his *Laws*, their Enemies conſider'd it as a Demonſtrative Proof of their being out of his *Favour* and *Protection* and a ſufficient Encouragement to Invade them: preſuming *God* would make them the Inſtruments of his *Juſtice* in puniſhing them for their Sins.

Particularly, in this very Caſe, we find that one great Inducement to the *Aſſyrians* to come up againſt *Hezekiah* at this time was a Preſumption that he had offended *God* by taking away the High-Places. *If ye ſay unto me* [ſays Rabſhakeh] *We truſt in the Lord our God: is not that He whoſe High-Places, and whoſe Altars Hezekiah hath taken away?* The Suppoſition that God was diſpleaſed with *Hezekiah* upon that Account made him look upon Himſelf as Authoriſed and Called by God to take Vengeance on Him. And, after this, when *Nebuchadnezar* overcame the *Jews* in the time of *Zedekiah*, the

2. *Kings* 18. 22.

the Account which *Nabuzarradan* gave of the Misfortunes that had befallen them was very true: *Now the Lord hath wrought this, and done as he hath said, because ye have sinned against the Lord and have not obeyed his Voice, therefore this thing hath come upon you.* Jerem. 40. 3.

And this was and will be, to the End of the World, the fixt and stated Method of God's dealing with every Nation under the Sun; tho', it may be, in a more secret and less perceptible way than that wherein he exerted and manifested his *Providence* over his own People.

So that, upon the whole, the General Principle, upon which the *Argument* is grounded, must be true; *viz.* That every Good and Righteous Nation or People, and only such, is the peculiar Care of *Gods Providence*, and entitled to his Protection. God Almighty Governs the World, Disposes and Orders all the Affairs of it: and since his Government must be supposed to be administred according to the most perfect Rules and Measures of *Justice*, it must necessarily follow, that in the Distribution of Good and Evil to Mankind, whether considered in their Seperate or United Capacities, God will distinguish them according to their Demeanor towards Him; Bless, protect and defend the Righteous, and punish the Wicked.

But

But now, tho' all this be granted; Yet ſtill *Hezekiah* could draw no Inference from it for the Comfort and Encouragement of his People, but upon this *Subſumption* or *Suppoſition*, that they were duly qualified for, and entitled to Gods Favour, as being a Good and Righteous Nation. Let us therefore enquire in the next Place,

2. Upon what *Grounds*, or for what Reaſons *Hezekiah* may be ſuppoſed to have applyed this *General Principle* to Himſelf and his People at this time, and upon this Occaſion, as preſuming them to be proper Objects of the diſtinguiſhing Care and Favour and Protection of the *Almighty*. Becauſe, I ſay. all the *Intereſt* that they, or we, or any People in the World, can have in that before mentioned Principle, that Good and Righteous Nations are ſure of Gods Favour and Protection, will be only in Proportion to the Evidence and Aſſurance they have of their being ſuch a Nation, a People *Fearing God and Working Righteouſneſs*.

Now the trueſt *Eſtimate* that can be made of the State and Condition of any People, as to this Point of their being a Righteous or a Wicked Nation, and conſequently of their being entitled to, or excluded from, the Favour and Protection of Almighty God; is, in my Apprehenſion,

ſion, to be taken chiefly from the Public National *Concern* or *Diſregard* that they ſhew for the Honour and Glory of *God*, and the Intereſts of Virtue and Religion; for eſtabliſhing and promoting Truth and Righteouſneſs and Holineſs among them. And the Senſe that any *Nation* hath of theſe things, as a Nation, is only diſcoverable from the *Laws* and *Conſtitutions* that are made about them, and the Care that the *Public* takes to have thoſe Laws duly executed.

And, therefore, as, on the one Hand, when the true Worſhip of God is either diſcountenanced, or ſuppreſſed, or vitiated with any corrupt Sinful Mixtures of *Idolatry* or *Superſtition*; When Virtue is publickly diſcouraged, and *Vice* allowed; or in a Word, when any Iniquity, of any ſort whatſoever, comes to be eſtabliſhed or enforced by the Laws of any Nation; as this, I ſay, is ſufficient to denominate that a Wicked and Ungodly *Nation*, Notwithſtanding that there may be many Private Perſons that preſerve their Integrity, and do not partake in the Public and National *Tranſgreſſion*, but ſuffer and are perſecuted upon the Account of it: ſo, on the other Hand, when the *Supreme Power* and Authority in a Nation exerts it ſelf and takes all poſſible Care by wholſome *Laws* and *Conſtitutions*, to ſecure the true Worſhip of *God*, to promote

mote the Intereſts of Virtue and *Religion*, and to ſuppreſs and root out all *Vice*, *Profaneneſs*, and *Immorality*, and whatever may be diſpleaſing to *Almighty God* ; and, moreover, takes due Care to have thoſe Laws faithfully Executed, and ſtrictly and Religiously Obſerved by all People; this, I hope, may be ſufficient to make it, in *Gods* Eſteem, a *Good* and *Righteous Nation*, notwithſtanding that, through the neglect of ſome Inferior Magiſtrates that ſhould Execute them, thoſe Laws may fail, perhaps, of having their full and *intended* Effect, and much *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality* ſtill remain unreformed among the particular Members of ſuch a Community.

Theſe, indeed, cut themſelves off from *Gods Favour*, and ſhall periſh in their Sins : but ſo long as the Vital Parts in the *Body* Politic are ſound and uninfected, there may ſtill be *Grounds* to hope that *God* will preſerve and protect it ; And that nothing but Public and *Nationally avowed* Wickedneſs ſhall bring down *National* Judgements upon any *People*.

No Good Prince wou'd think fit to Diſfranchiſe and utterly deſtroy the Liberties and Priviledges of a City, merely for the miſcarriages of ſome particular Members of it, ſo long as the Magiſtrates and Governing Part of it continued to do their Duty, and took what Care they could

could to reſtrain or reform them. The Particular Offenders, in ſuch a Caſe, might juſtly ſuffer; but ſeeing the City, as a City, would not be involved in the *Guilt*, ſo neither would it be in the *Puniſhment*. And, I hope, *God*, who is infinitely more merciful than Man will deal no leſs favourably with a *Nation* or *People* in the like Circumſtances.

And now, to apply this to the preſent Caſe of the *Jews*: If we conſider the Behaviour of this *Good King Hezekiah*, from his firſt Acceſſion to the *Throne* till his time [the whole ſeries whereof we have recorded in the three preceding Chapters] we ſhall find how well he deſerved that *Glorious Character* that was given of Him; That *he did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, ſo that after Him was none like Him of all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before Him.* 2. *Chron.* 29. 30. 31. 2. *Kings* 18.

His Principal Care, you'l find, all along, was to Correct and reform the Fatal miſcarriages of his Fathers *Government*, effectually to ſuppreſs that *Idolatry* which he had introduced, to reeſtabliſh the *true Worſhip* of *God*, and to engage all his Subjects, as well by the *Influence* of his own Example, as by the *Authority* of his Public Edicts, to perſevere in a ſtedfaſt and diligent Obſervance of it. And finding the Treaſures of the Temple exhauſted, and the Offerings of

the *People*, which ſhould have been repoſited there, and out of which Proviſion for the Morning and Evening Burnt-Offerings, and the Burnt-Offerings for the *Sabaoths* and *New-Moons* and Other ſet Feaſts ſhould have been made; finding them, I ſay, alienated and diverted to *Other Uſes*: Such was his Zeal for his *Makers Honour* and *Glory*, that, for the better Encouragement of the *Prieſts* and *Levites* to do their Duty, and that the Service of *God* might not be neglected, or too ſcantily provided for, he thought fit to Appropriate a Branch of his own Revenue, a *Portion of his own Subſtance* to theſe Uſes, as you find at the third Verſe of the preceding Chapter.

2. *Chron.* 31. 3

Conſidering now the happy poſture that this *Good King* and his *People* were in, at this time; while the Piety of the *Prince* diffuſed it ſelf and produced a Conformable Behaviour in his Subjects; While *Religion* was duly *Reformed* according to the Rule of *God's Word*, His true *Worſhip* effectually Eſtabliſhed, and Truth and Righteouſneſs protected and encouraged among them; doubtleſs, *Hezekiah* had *Good Grounds* to Hope, that ſuch a *Nation* as this would be the peculiar Care of the *Divine Providence*, and that *God* would not *give them up to the Will of their Enemies*, but *be with them and fight their Battels*.

It would be a pardonable *Digreſſion*, ſhould I here

here take Occaſion to repreſent to you, how nearly the *Conduct* of our own *moſt Gracious Sovereign*, ever ſince Her happy Acceſſion to the *Throne* of Her Anceſtors, reſembles this of *Hezekiah*: in the many evident Teſtimonies She hath given of Her firm *Zeal* for *God's Honour* and *Glory*; in Her pious *Sollicitude* and Conſtant *Endeavours* to promote Virtue and Holineſs, and diſcourage and ſuppreſs all Vice and Irreligion among Her *People*; in Her Adorning and Recommending to Others by Her own bright *Example* the true *Religion* eſtabliſhed among us, as well as in protecting it by Her *Authority*; and, to mention no more, in Her ſo generouſly Appropriating a Conſiderable *Branch* of Her own *Revenue* for the making a more Comfortable and Decent Subſiſtence for ſuch as *God* ſhall call to attend at his *Altars*. But this, I doubt not, every one hath done already in his own Mind.

Give me leave, therefore, only to ſay: that this late Act of Her *Majeſties* Charity and Munificence to *God* and His *Church*, as it ſhall ſhine forever with a Diſtinguiſhing *Luſtre* among the many Other *Glories* of Her *Reign*, add to the Brightneſs of Her *Character*, and make Her Memory bleſſed among all ſucceeding *Generations*; ſo it was a *Free-Will Offering* ſo acceptable, ſo well pleaſing unto *God*, that, for ought I know, Her *Majeſties own perſonal Goodneſs* and Piety,

expreſſed in this and many Other Inſtances, may have been more Inſtrumental, conduced more to the deriving down from *Heaven* upon us thoſe Signal *Bleſſings* and *Mercies* that we are this Day comemorating, than all the *Force* of Her Arms, or the *Conduct* or *Valour* of Her Generals. But to Return,

3. You have ſeen now. 1. in General, that every *Good* and *Righteous Nation* hath a Title to *God's Favour*, and needs not doubt of his Protection; And, 2. You have ſeen upon what *Good Grounds Hezekiah* took *Himſelf* and His *People* to be ſuch a *Nation*, ſo qualified for, ſo entitled to *God Almighty's Favour* and *Protection*. And, the Premiſes being cleared, I need not inſiſt long upon ſhewing the Force of the *Concluſion* which He draws from them; that, therefore, they needed not to *fear or be diſmayed for the King of Aſſyria*, &c. *God was with them, and would fight their Battels.*

For, what Occaſion can they have to *Fear* that fight under the *Banner* of the Almighty? Or how can they be diſmayed who have the Lord of Hoſts for their *Defence and Shield againſt the Face of their Enemies*? No Earthly Policy can overreach Him; *No Counſils formed againſt Him can proſper. He diſapointeth the Deviſes of the Crafty, ſo that their Hands cannot perform their Enter-*

Job. 5. 12.

priſe

priſe ; *He taketh the Wiſe in their own Craftineſs* ; *He knows that their thoughts are Vain.*

And as Human Policy can little avail againſt His infinite Wisdom, ſo what can Human Force, the *Arm of Fleſh*, do. againſt His *Omnipotency*, when His Almighty Arm is ſtretched out in *Defence* of his People ?

Well, therefore, might *Hezekiah*, from the Conſideration of *Gods* being with them, encourage the *People* not to fear or be diſmayed for the ſtrength or multitude of their *Enemies* ; being well aſſured that *God* would interpoſe for their Deliverance : as you find he did in a wonderful Manner. *He ſent His Angel and cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of Aſſyria* ; *And ſo He returned with ſhame of Face into his own Land. And thus the Lord ſaved Hezekiah and the Inhabitants of Jeruſalem from the Hand of Sennacherib, and from the Hands of all Others, And guided them on every ſide.* And *Bleſſed are all they that are in ſuch a Caſe*, that have an Intereſt in and title to the Favour and Protection of the Almighty, *Yea Bleſſed are all they who have the Lord for their God.* v. v. 21, 22.

Having thus Conſidered the *Nature* and *Force* of the *Argument* that *Hezekiah* here makes uſe of

of, give me now leave, in the next Place, by way of Application, to ſee

II. What Corollaries are naturally deducible from what has been ſaid, ſuitable to the *Occaſion* of this Days *Solemnity* : and I ſhall mention but one or two.

I. If *God Almighty Governs* the World, and by the Influence of His Overruleing *Providence* determines the Iſſue and Succeſs of all *Public Enterprizes* ; it follows from hence, that, as all *National Bleſſings* and *Deliverances* are chiefly owing to his *Goodneſs*, by what immediate and ſubordinate *Inſtruments* ſoever they are brought to paſs, to Him therefore the *Tribute* of thanks and Praiſe for the ſame is principally due : And to withhold it from Him, or to give it, in that Degree, to Others, is a Complication of Ingratitude, Injuſtice and Sacriledge ; a Robbing *God* of the Glory that belongs to him, and which he declares *He is jealous of, and will not give to Another.* Iſa. 42,

It is the Diſcharge of this *Duty* towards our Heavenly *Benefactor* that this Day's Solemnity invites us to : a Duty ſo delightful in it ſelf, ſo Beneficial to us, and which the late Signal Mercies of *God* towards us call ſo loudly for at this time, that we ſhould not, one would think,

ſtand

ſtand in much need of being preſſed to it.

For, what can be more agreeable and delightful than the Exerciſe of that *Duty*, which conſiſts in the Contemplation of our own *Happineſs*, in commemorating the Goodneſs, the Favour, the Beneficence, the Loving-Kindneſs of the Lord; in Dwelling upon the Evidences and Indications the great King of the World hath given us of His *Love* and *Good-will* towards us?

This is the happy *Employment* in which the Bleſſed Spirits above, Angels and Saints in Glory, paſs away *Eternity*. The Mercies and Loving-Kindneſs of the Lord are the never failing *Subject* of thoſe *Hymns* and *Hallelujahs* that they are continually pouring forth unto *Him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb*. And, till *God* ſhall be pleaſed to admit us to bear a part in that Heavenly Quire, what can Adminiſter more Comfort, more Joy and Delight to pious Souls, than to Conſider, that they are engaged and exerciſeing themſelves in the ſame Work with them; In Celebrateing and ſetting forth, tho' not in ſuch high and exalted Strains as they do, the Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory of their Heavenly King?

Moreover, as Nothing can be more *delightfull*, ſo Nothing can be more *profitable* and *Beneficial* to us than the due practice of this Duty:

A grateful Acknowledgement of the *Benefits* we have already received being the most Effectual way to secure the *Continuance* of them, and to dispose *God* to bestow and to qualifie us to receive a larger *Portion* of his Mercies and Favours for the Future. Whereas, *Ingratitude*, or a sullen or stupid *Insensibilitie* under past or present Mercies, will tempt him *to turn away his Face from us, and Shut up his Loving-Kindness in Displeasure.*

These are sufficient *Inducements* to recommend this Duty to us at all Times: And the many Mercies we daily receive at the Hand of *God* in the *Ordinary* Course of his Providence always afford a proper Subject for it. But such *Extraordinary* Instances of his Favour as those we are *this Day* comemorating call louder for it; For a Demonstration of our *Thankfulness* proportionable in some *Degree* to the Greatness of those Mercies that are the Objects of it. *God hath shewed us his Goodness plenteously; He hath let us see our Desire upon our Enemies: therefore let us Offer in his Dwelling an Oblation with great Gladness; Let us rejoyce and give Praise for the Operations of his Hands.*

The Signal *Successes* with which *God* has lately Blessed the *Arms* of Her Majesty and Her Allies, both by *Land* and *Sea*, and particularly that

Glorious

Glorious *Victory* which is the principal *Subject* of this Day's *Thanksgiving*, are so surprizingly Great in themselves, and must prove, if our *Unworthiness* do not Obstruct the *Influence* of them, of such happy Consequence to this *Nation*, and to the composeing and setling the present Distraction of *Europe*, that they have exceeded not our *Merits* only, but even our *Hopes* and *Expectations*; Nay, I believe I may safely say, our very *Wishes*. *God* has extended his *Mercy* beyond what, a few Months agoe, any prudent considering Man even *secretly* wished or desired, when he drew the *Plan* of the Success of those Noble *Enterpizes* in his own Mind; as you will, I believe, be easily satisfied by recollecting what your Sentiments of those things then were.

Could any thing be more for her *Majesty's* Honour, or the *Nation's* Glory, than our having been so Instrumental in supporting a *Sinking Empire*, and saving it from *Ruin*, by suppressing the Pride and Haughtiness of that *Rebellious Prince*, that was the Principal Disturber and Oppressor of it? Who, from the utmost Height of his *Glory*, running on in the full Carier of his *Ambition*, flushed with the *Success* of his former *Enterprizes* and the *Advantages* he had gained; and strengthened with all the Succours that his *Grand Allie* could supply him with, has been reduced to the wretched Circumstances of seeing

his *Armies* diſcomfited and broken to pieces, his *Forts* and *Garriſons* taken or ſurrendered, his *Towns* burnt, his *Cities* plundred, and his whole *Country* expoſed to the Mercy and Diſcretion of the Conquerors; and Himſelf forced to ſeek a Diſhonourable *Retreat* and a Precarious *Subſiſtance* in a Foreign *Nation*, that common Grave of late, of misguided and unfortunate *Princes*, poiſoned by it's *Counſels*, and Ruined by it's *Friendſhip*: and all this within the compaſs of a very few *Months*, a leſs time than, perhaps, our curious and Obſerving *Travellors* ſhall hereafter think fit to ſpend in ſeeing the *Trophies* and *Monuments* of this Victory, and their *Nation's Valour* in that now deſolate Country, the Scene of theſe great and glorious *Tranſactions*. *Whoſo are Wiſe and will Obſerve theſe things, they ſhall underſtand the Loving-Kindneſs of the Lord: for this is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes.*

But the Determining the *Fate* of this *Ambitious Prince* is not the only good *Effect* that attends the happy Succeſs of this great and *Heroical* Enterpriſe: As it hath ſtrengthened the Hands of thoſe *Confederate Princes and States* who have already engaged in that *Noble Deſign* of Aſſerting the *Liberties* of *Europe* againſt the great *Oppreſſor* of it, ſo it will open the Eyes of thoſe with whom their *Fears* or particular *Intereſts* have hitherto been more prevalent to hinder

them

them from bearing a *ſhare* in the Hazards and Expence of this *Federal War*, than the *Honour* and *Juſtice* and *Apparent Neceſſity* of it hath been to engage them in it.

And when the Common Cauſe comes to be ſtrengthened by ſuch Acceſſions, we may hope that in a ſhort time, *God* will perfect the good Work which he hath begun, and let us ſee the Power of that Common Enemy and Oppreſſor, that like a *Comet* has thoſe many years been threatning *Ruin* and *Deſtruction* to theſe *Weſtern Parts* of the World, grow daily leſs and leſs, and dwindle away. and at laſt go out like a *Snuff* and leave a *Stench* behind it.

Now, tho' the *Incenſe* of our thanks and Praiſe for the Signal *Mercies* we now commemorate, muſt be *Principally* and *Ultimately* directed unto *God*, the chief *Author* and *Giver* of them; Yet well may the *Odour* of it, while it is aſcending towards *Heaven* diffuſe it ſelf and reach even to thoſe that under the *Direction* and *Influence* of His *Good Providence* have been the *Inſtruments* by whom he hath conveyed them to us.

As it would not be thought to derogate from the *Majeſty* of a *Prince* to make grateful Acknowledgement of the *Favours* that any of his *Miniſters* hath freely done us, tho' it were by Vir-

tue of a *Power* derived from Him which enabled them to do it ; ſo neither, in this *Caſe*, will the *Great King* of the World be diſpleaſed or think Himſelf injured by the *Honours* we pay to thoſe, by whoſe *Valour* or *Conduct*, He hath wrought any great *Deliverances* for us ; ſo long as they do not terminate there, but are *Ultimately* directed to Him, as the Principal *Author* and *Giver* of them.

May there then be no Envious, nor Factious *Hanno's* in our *Carthage*, either to ſullen the Glory, or leſſen the Succeſs, or depreciate or ſtop the Proſecution of the *Victories* of our *Hannibal*, and thoſe that have ſhared with him in the *Danger* and the Glory of them : whoſe prudent *Conduct* and Exemplary *Valour* have revived the Ancient *Spirit* and *Genius* of the *Engliſh Nation*, and made it to rouſe and ſtretch it ſelf once more, as *a ſtrong Man after Sleep, or like a Giant refreſhed with Wine* ; to the Glory of *Her Majeſty*, the ſupport of Her *Allies*, and the Terror of Her *Enemies*.

May they therefore enjoy the *Honours* they have juſtly gained without being *Envyed*, and be Great without *Detraction* : Let the preſent *Age* celebrate their *Praiſes* while they Live, and let their *Fame* ſurvive to all ſucceeding *Generations*. And, laſtly, may thoſe Noble and Generous *Principles*

Principles that they are acted and influenced with ſo diffuſe and propagate themſelves in every *Engliſh* Breaſt, that this *Nation* may never want a Succeſſion of ſuch Men as ſhall prefer *Honour* before *Eaſe*; And *Dangers*, in Defence of their Prince and Country, before an inglorious *Safety*; and even an Honourable *Death* before the *Unmanly* Softneſſes and Pleaſures of an uſeleſs and Effeminate *Life*. But

11. If the Happineſs of a *Nation* depends upon the divine Favour and Protection, which no *Nation*, as has been ſhewn, can lay Claim to, but upon the Account of their being a *Good* and *Righteous People*; it follows from hence, that our firſt and great Care muſt be to gain an *Intereſt* in *God's Favour*, and clear up the *Evidences* of our Title to his Protection, by conforming our ſelves to his bleſſed *Will* in all things, and living under the Power and Influence of his *Holy Religion*.

For, if we think to procure our ſafety and accompliſh our Deſigns merely by our own Strength and Policy, we ſubvert the *Order* of things, and begin where, indeed, we ſhould end. Our firſt Care ſhould be to qualifie our ſelves for His Favour, and then we may hope for a *Bleſſing* upon our Endeavours: What *Joſuah* ſaid to the Children of *Iſrael* being applicable to this

and

Jos. 24. 20. and all other *Nations* under the Sun ; *If ye forſake the Lord, then he will turn and do you Hurt, and Conſume you after that he hath done you good.*

May we all therefore, *my Brethren*, as we tender either our own or the Nations Happineſs, ſanctifie this Day's *Feſtivitie*, by mixing with our Praiſes and Thanksgivings to God ſincere Purpoſes and ſtedfaſt Reſolutions of entring upon a through *Reformation* of our own Lives, and of promoting it what we can, according to our ſeveral *Stations* and *Capacities*, in Others. And let us beſeech Almighty God to heal all our *Breaches* and Compoſe our *Differences* ; to remove from among us all groundleſs *Fears* and *Jealouſies*, all unchriſtian *Heats*, and *Animoſities*, all *Immoralities* and *Profaneneſs*, all *Vice* and *Irreligion*, and whatever may Obſtruct his Mercies and Favours towards this *Church* and *Nation* : that Wickedneſs may not prevail among us, nor *Deceit and Guile appear in our Streets* ; but that *Judgement may run down as Waters, and Righteoſneſs as a mighty Stream.* For then the Lord will *delight to dwell among us and to do us good* ; *He will cover us under the ſhadow of his Wings* ; *He will be with us to help us, and to fight our Battels*, diſcomfit all our Adverſaries, and *put them to Confuſion that hate us* : *He will give ſtrength unto his People, the Lord will bleſs his People with Peace.*

And

And then, *O God*, may thoſe Bleſſed *Days* appear which thou by thy Holy *Prophets*, has foretold ſhall come; *When Wars ſhall ceaſe in all the World, When the Nations ſhall beat their Swords into Plow-ſhares and their Spears into Pruning Hooks; When Nation ſhall no longer lift up a Sword againſt Nation; neither ſhall they learn War any more; When there ſhall be no more Deſtroying in all thy Holy Mountain, but the Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord as Waters Cover the Sea.*

And in Order thereunto, and to prepare and diſpoſe all things for that happy *Time*, let thy great *Name* be Glorified, the *Goſpel* propagated, and the Kingdom of thy Bleſſed *Son* enlarged more and more over the Face of the whole Earth; That all the Nations of the World, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, may come, and fall down and Worſhip before Him, ſaying, as we do this Day, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour and Power be unto the Lord our God, for ever and ever, *Amen.*

FINIS.